



SENATOR

**Mary Margaret Haugen**

E-Newsletter - 10th District

[Web Site](#) | [Contact me](#) | [About the Legislature](#)

**10th Legislative District**

**March 16, 2009**

**IMPORTANT REMINDER - TOWN HALL MEETINGS**

Please join me and other members of our community at one of the two town hall meetings I will be hosting this Saturday.

The first event will begin at 10 a.m. in the Stanwood Middle School Cafeteria at [9405 271st Street NW](#).

An afternoon event will begin at 2 p.m. in the Coupeville Recreation Hall at [901 N. Alexander Street](#).

During these meetings I'll give a brief rundown of locally important bills moving through the Legislature and an overview of the state budget situation. That will be followed by a question-and-answer session during which I hope to get valuable feedback to consider during the remainder of the 2009 Session.

I hope I will see you there!

**2009 LEGISLATURE — WEEK NINE**

Last Thursday was “cutoff” in the Legislature — the last day for the Senate to pass our bills and for the House of Representatives to pass theirs. Bills that have passed each chamber proceed to the opposite chamber for consideration; only those that pass both chambers proceed to the governor for her signature to become law.

Many of the bills I've sponsored survived cutoff and are currently being considered by the House, including:

**SB 5180** — formalizes the practice that most rural public transit vehicles already do — stopping at unmarked areas to pick up or drop off riders when it's safe.

**SB 5350** — allows the producers of all poultry to take advantage of an existing law that lets some poultry producers sell chickens directly to the public.

**SB 5354** — enables a community to place a measure to create a Public Hospital Capital Facility Areas before voters when the county receives a petition from at least 10 percent of voters in the district who voted in the last general election and with approval of the county commission.

**SB 5355** — petitions to create a rural county library district may include the maximum initial levy rate and that the initial levy rate may not be higher than the rate set by the vote that established the rural county library district.

**[SB 5356](#)** — allows a wider range of commercial fishing operations to obtain the Direct Retail Endorsement needed to clean, dress, and sell seafood directly to consumers.

**[SB 5461](#)** — provides an automatic waiver on the reporting requirements for condominium associations consisting of 10 or fewer units

**[SB 5797](#)** — eases regulatory restrictions on food byproducts in anaerobic digesters that run primarily on cow manure.

**[SB 5978](#)** — establishes clearer guidelines and requirements for promotional consumer mail-in rebates.

Unfortunately, not every good idea makes it through the legislative process, and this year I'm especially disappointed that **[SB 5625](#)** to designate Snohomish county the home of our next state university didn't make it. This bill will remain in the Senate, and I will bring it forward again next year.

Of course, these aren't the only Senate bills now moving through the House. I describe some of the more important other bills below, but since there are more than can fit in this e-mail, [click here](#) for a full list.



### **OUR TOP CHEFS**

Last week I also got to meet Oak Harbor's own "top chefs" when Alena Stapel, Luke Felkner, Matt McDonald, Nick Merrick, Valkyrie Jordan, Ashley Kutzley, Danica Growney, Brady Kittelson, William Mims and Tyler Johnson of the Oak Harbor High School Culinary Team stopped off to visit the state capitol.

Their team took top honors in a statewide competition and will soon be on its way to the national championships in San Diego!

### **HELPING THOSE WHO ARE LOSING THEIR HOMES**

A home should be a shelter, not a cause of worry. Our state has been seeing a disturbing [increase in foreclosures](#). Currently, the process of foreclosure is six months long with numerous steps. The Senate this week added a new step to the process that some are lauding as the biggest piece of consumer protection legislation they will see in their lifetime.

**[Senate Bill 5810](#)** adds a mediation step to the foreclosure process. This step will allow the homeowner and the lender to review potential options that will avoid foreclosure. The measure also adds new protections for renters. If a renter's home gets foreclosed, a tenant now must receive 60 days notice that they have to vacate their home. This is an extension from the current requirement of only 20 days.

### **GREEN JOBS: ENERGY RETROFITS TO HOMES, BUSINESSES AND FARMS**

The **[Senate's green jobs energy retrofit bill](#)** helps people save money by reducing energy use and lowering their home heating bills, helps preserve our environment by reducing the greenhouse gasses emitted by 20,000 more homes and utilities, **[and provides for long-term job growth](#)** by allocating federal funding into future job training. Millions of dollars in federal stimulus funds, which will be directed to the state this year for energy efficiency projects, can be put to use immediately and effectively to create jobs today.

## **BASIC EDUCATION REFORM**

The Senate [passed a measure](#) that is the result of 18 months of work by the state's Basic Education Finance Task Force. It's a fundamental redefinition of the legal definition of "basic education," important because the state constitution lays this out as the state's most important duty. [Senate Bill 6048](#) funds schools using a new "prototypical school" model that more closely tailors funding to individual schools' needs. The bill does not prescribe funding and would not allow new requirements to take effect without funding.

This is a work in progress. Lawmakers continue to meet with key stakeholders to refine the bill. As part a larger effort, [Senate Bill 5941](#) would establish a new education data system that streamlines core information about students, teachers, schools and the like so that we better understand which investments are and aren't paying off.

## **CUTTING UNFUNDED EDUCATIONAL MANDATES**

We must cut red tape for school districts and throw out unfunded mandates. The Senate [passed three bills this week](#) that begin to do just that, cutting about 60 unfunded requirements that are currently placed on school districts. We should rely more on locally elected school boards to do what is right for their communities.

## **ORGAN TRANSPLANTS**

[Senate Bill 5725](#) increases the minimum coverage for transplants. The current insurance practice is to cap coverage at \$250,000. The bill raises the minimum to \$350,000. We heard a lot of distressing accounts from real people who had suffered because of this minimum. Today a transplant can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars, and I was pleased to support an increase in the amount of coverage allowed.

## **CHILD WELFARE SERVICES REFORM**

The Senate also [passed much needed reforms](#) for the Child Welfare Services division of the Department of Social and Human Services (DSHS). [Senate Bill 5943](#) will allow DSHS to move nearly all of its family reconciliation and preservation, adoption, foster care, and many other services into Performance Based Contracts, potentially with private non-profit agencies.

It's an effort to bring about change in a system that has seen complaints on the rise over the last few years. CWS has also seen fatality rates skyrocket by nearly 70 percent since 2007. The goal of this bill is to increase efficiencies and offer incentives for success while keeping the focus where it should be – the safety and well-being of Washington's children.



Sen. Mary Margaret Haugen with Floyd Jones who was honored by the Washington State Senate in a resolution that Haugen introduced.  
20080303-3484 WASHSENATE.dn

## **HONORING FLOYD JONES**

Last week the Senate took a moment to adopt a resolution that I sponsored to honor a lifetime of service by Floyd Jones, who rose from humble beginnings as a cotton picker in Arkansas, served honorably in the United States Army, and became a successful businessman and philanthropist.

Floyd Jones has given so much to each and every one of us through a lifetime of commitment to the arts, the environment, and his community — all of which have been exemplified through the Floyd and Delores Jones Foundation.

Endowments made by the foundation include: a chair for the arts at the University of Washington; the Floyd and Delores Jones Playhouse; the Seattle public television station KCTS; the Floyd and Delores Jones Cancer Institute in Virginia Mason Hospital; and a strong commitment to preserving the sanctity of Livingston Bay on the northeast side of Camano Island.

The resolution honoring the life of Floyd Jones can be read [here](#).



### **IT'S TULIP TIME**

The tulips and other bulbs planted around the capitol campus haven't opened yet, but that doesn't mean it's too early for fragrant flowers to bloom in the Senate – which is why I was pleased to greet the delegation from the Skagit Valley Tulip Festival visited the state capitol last week.

The Tulip Festival is a great family-friendly event that does so much for the economy of our area, with nearly half a million people visiting the Skagit Valley Tulip Festival each year.

This year's delegation included ambassadors **Christian Lathrom** and **Veronica Pratt**, Tulip Festival Executive Director Cindy Verge, Tulip Festival Intern Angela Lowrance, Brian and Donnabell Lathrom, and Tony and Glenda Pratt.

In addition to meeting with local legislators, the group met with other dignitaries including Gov. Chris Gregoire, Lt. Gov. Brad Owen and Speaker of the House Frank Chopp.



### **PAGES**

This week we had two impressive local students participating in the Senate Page Program.

Joshua Ekberg from Oak Harbor High School first decided he wanted to be a page someday when he visited the capitol on a 4<sup>th</sup> grade field trip. He enjoyed the action on the Senate floor, where we debate and vote on bills.

Annika Skaugrud from Stanwood High School thought that the page program would be a great way to learn about state government, and enjoyed watching the Senate committee hearings.



Thank you both for your service to our state!

### **WE'RE HERE TO HELP**

My executive assistant Nova Gattman, legislative assistant Gina Bull and intern Beau Perschbacher are available to provide constituent services to the people of our community, so please feel free to contact us with questions or concerns — whether they involve bills before the Legislature

or topics you feel are being overlooked.

You can reach me by [e-mail](#) or call my office in Olympia at **360-786-7618**. If you have a concern, I want to hear it.

In the meantime, please visit my [web page](#) for up-to-date info on what's happening at the Legislature. I post regular updates — including video — onto my blog, and it's far more information than we'd want to put in a weekly update like this.

Until next week — Take Care!

Thank you for reading my email newsletter. I appreciate your interest in the legislative process. If at any time you decide you no longer wish to receive updates from me, please go to <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/subscriptions/member.aspx?member=haugenm> to remove your name from the list.

**Washington Senate Democratic Caucus**